



# F-35 Lightning II Program

Public Affairs Release – 2016 08 05

## F-35A combat readiness celebrated at Hill AFB

**HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah** -- Hill AFB hosted a ceremony Aug. 5 in celebration of the recent announcement that the F-35A Lightning II aircraft is ready for combat.

Gen. Hawk Carlisle, the commander of Air Combat Command, declared that the fifth-generation fighter aircraft was 'combat ready' Aug. 2.

During the ceremony, Carlisle lauded the aircraft's performance and praised Airmen for getting the aircraft to initial operational capability.

"This celebration today is about our Airmen," Carlisle said. "We are the greatest fighting force in the history of the world not because of technology, but because of our Airmen and what they do with the technology we've given them. Every adversary is going to fear us and they're going to fear our airplane because of what our Airmen have done with the F-35."

The F-35A is the latest addition to ACC's fleet of deployable and fifth-generation aircraft. It provides air superiority, interdiction, suppression of enemy air defenses and close air support as well as command and control functions through fused sensors, and will provide pilots with situational awareness of the battlespace that will be more extensive than any single-seat platform in existence.

In her remarks, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James also credited the combination of Airmen and technology in getting the F-35A to IOC.

"There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that by pairing air, space, and cyberspace technologies together, America's Airmen and the F-35A will lead the joint force in assuming our nation's advantage against any adversary in the future, especially in the event we get into a high-end fight with a foe that has anti-access aerial denial capabilities," James said. "This aircraft could not have come any sooner."

Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, gave a vivid description of the dynamic new capability that will benefit the joint warfighter. He used audience participation to get his message across to our adversaries.

"I need you to imagine yourself in an enemy aircraft and your nation's leadership has made the unwise decision to bet [against] the U.S. or our allies and partners," Goldfein instructed the mostly-Airmen audience seated in front of six F-35As outside the event hangar. "Now slowly turn your head and look behind you at these magnificent machines and these magnificent Airmen. This is the picture you will likely see before you depart this planet. Actually, let me change that. You'll still depart the planet, but you'll never see these."

The 34th Fighter Squadron of the 388th Fighter Wing, based at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, is the service's first operational F-35A squadron, having met all the established criteria for Initial Operational Capability including a successful June deployment to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, and a series of eight-aircraft sorties held in mid-July. Airmen from the 34th FS will fly and maintain the F-35A alongside Air Force Reservists from Hill's 419th Fighter Wing.

"The last time I stood here, I asked you to tighten your chin straps and get to work," said Col. David Lyons, 388th FW commander. "I asked the men and women of the 388th Fighter Wing, the 419th Fighter Wing, the 75th Air Base Wing, the Ogden Air Logistics Complex, our enterprise partners, and the thousands of Airmen around our service to work daily on this program, to help deliver the future to the United States Air Force, to get this airplane in the fight. Today I want to say loud and clear to our Airmen for both our friends and our adversaries to hear: You delivered."

Those sentiments were echoed by Col. David Smith, 419th Fighter Wing commander.

"This truly is a great time for our combat Air Force," Smith said. "With the declaration of IOC, the future is now. It's arrived."



In her remarks, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James also credited the combination of Airmen and technology in getting the F-35A to IOC ...